DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 466 513 UD 035 143

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TITLE	Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders. Program Profiles.
INSTITUTION	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	44p.; For Overview and Policy Profiles, see UD 035 141 and 142.
AVAILABLE FROM	Annie E. Casey Foundation, 701 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202. Tel: 410-223-2890; Fax: 410-547-6624; Web site: http://www.aecf.org/publications.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adolescents; *Delinquency; *Job Training; *Juvenile Justice; Program Effectiveness; Public Policy; Rehabilitation; *Work Experience Programs; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*Youth Development Model

ABSTRACT

This publication is part of a toolkit that examines systemic barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency for court-involved youth. It highlights 15 exemplary programs in the world of criminal justice for young people. The programs are all based on youth development principles and are guided by a comprehensive set of core principles that view young adults and their needs holistically. The 15 programs demonstrate that the core principles can be applied to the field of juvenile justice. Researchers collected information for these profiles by first contacting practitioners, funders, policymakers, and researchers and identifying 15 efforts that displayed promising practices for preparing youth offenders for successful education and work-related outcomes (critically applying the Promising and Effective Practices Network criteria for effective practice). They visited each site and completed a four-step evaluation that involved touring the grounds and facilities and interviewing site directors, staff members, and program participants. After each site visit, short reports were prepared that offered a program overview, gave outcome data, and listed exemplary practices. (SM)

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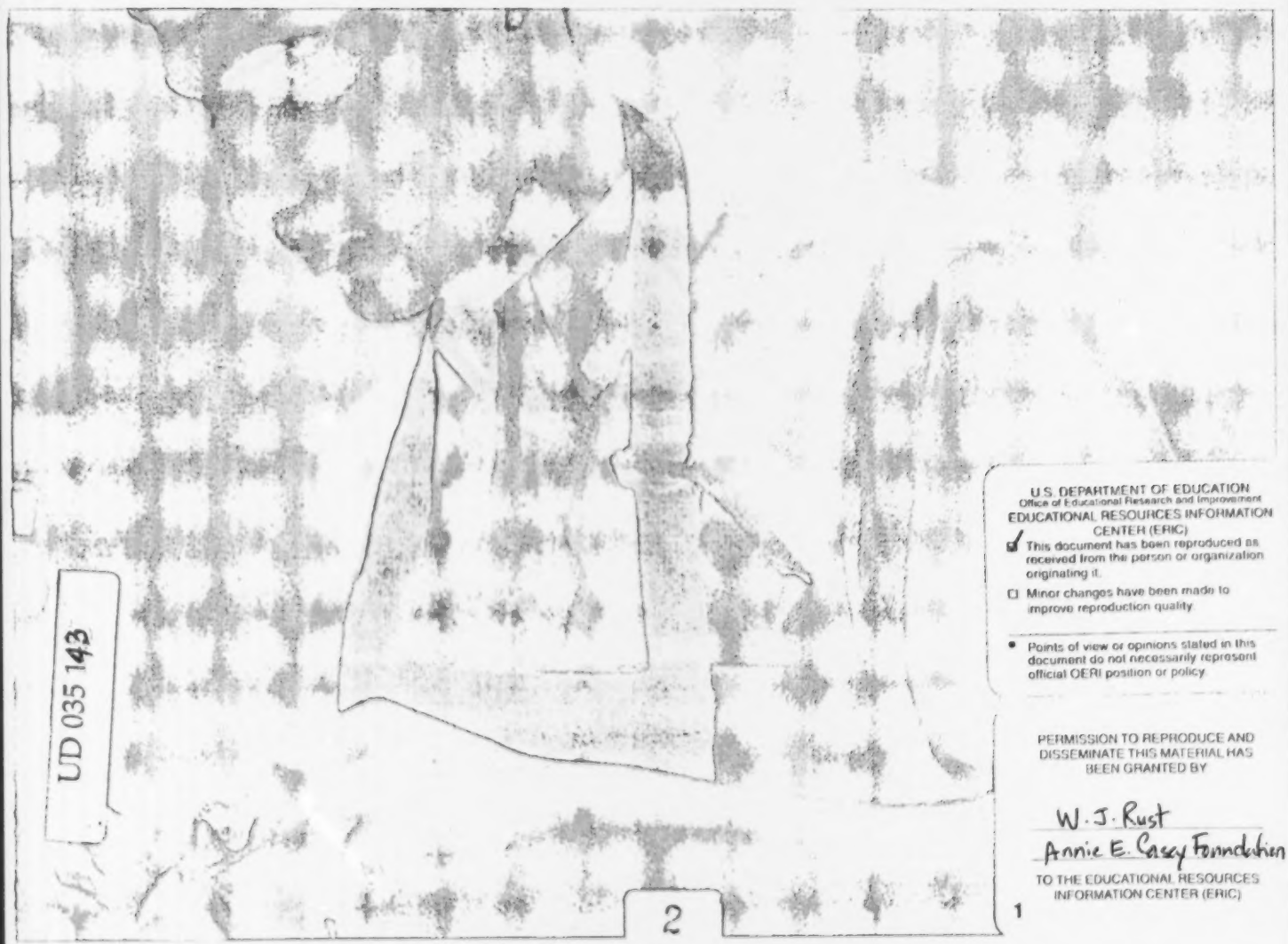
Barriers and Promising Approaches to Workforce and Youth Development for Young Offenders

PROGRAM PROFILES



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Vincent Schiraldi is president of the private, nonprofit Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJCJ), which works to reduce society's reliance on the use of incarceration as a solution to social problems. In 1997, the center founded the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), which conducts research, proffers model legislation, and is active in promoting a rational criminal justice discourse in the electronic and print media. More information is available at www.cjcj.org.

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introduction

In 1997, the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice sponsored a task force to study ways of meeting the employment and training needs of young people who had been in trouble with the law. The task force was convened by the Home Builders Institute, which was searching for ways to enhance vocational preparation, reduce youth crime and recidivism, and improve the prospects for court-involved youth in the labor market.[1]

In 1999, the Annie E. Casey Foundation asked the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC), in cooperation with the Youth Development and Research Fund (YDRF) and the Justice Policy Institute (JPI), to build on the task force's work. The Foundation wanted to identify what works: exemplary programs and policy initiatives that help court-involved youth become economically self-sufficient.

The question of whether employment and training programs are the solution to the problems that confront the juvenile justice system is a legitimate one. For a good portion of the past two decades youth crime and juvenile justice have been subjected to sustained attention and study. The issues matter to policymakers, juvenile justice workers, politicians, and parents, and they matter to the young people themselves.

The national study undertaken by NYEC, JPI, and YDRF had three objectives:

- Identify barriers to reform of the juvenile justice system and review the literature on youth employment, workforce development, and juvenile justice.

- Survey and synthesize information about innovative state and local policy initiatives that promote effective programming.

- Examine exemplary youth employment and development programs that explicitly serve juvenile offenders.

The resulting three-part toolkit examines the systemic barriers to achieving economic self-sufficiency for court-involved youth; it identifies creative approaches to overcoming those barriers; and it details how communities, stakeholders, and practitioners can more effectively prepare young people involved in the juvenile justice system for self-sufficiency and productive citizenship. The overview outlines some of the problems and identifies some of the avenues to their solution, this portion highlights 15 exemplary programs in the world of criminal justice for young people, and there is another part devoted to 19 exemplary policy initiatives.

The programs highlighted here were selected as a way to define a set of common, effective practices. What we learned was that, even though all are criminal justice programs in whole or in part, their efforts are based on youth development principles.

There have been few systematic efforts to identify the key elements of programs that prepare court-involved young people for economic self-sufficiency. Public and private institutions usually focus on prevention or on crisis intervention to mitigate the costs to society of juvenile crime and delinquency, rather than exploring how to more effectively habilitate, rehabilitate, and reintegrate these young offenders so they can become productive members of society. In contrast to many programs within the juvenile justice system, the programs highlighted here are guided by a

comprehensive set of principles that view young adults and their needs holistically. They are grounded in an assets-based approach that stresses young people's strengths and works to empower them instead of focusing on their perceived deficits.

Among the critical elements that reflect the core principles of youth development are mentoring, community service, leadership development, positive peer-centered activities, and long-term follow-up and supports. The 15 programs here demonstrate that the core principals can be applied to the field of juvenile justice. Whether we as a society want to be tough on crime or not, the recent history of juvenile justice has demonstrated that building more juvenile prisons, placing more young people in adult facilities, and imposing more punitive sanctions are not working.

All 15 programs have found ways to advance youth development principles despite the limits imposed on organizations that serve juvenile offender populations. And the fact that they all have recidivism rates below 20 percent raises some good questions: Is it more cost effective and "tough on crime" to place young people in a juvenile correctional institution or in programs similar to those highlighted here? Which alternatives best serve the needs of the community? Which best meet individual needs? Perhaps by shying away from infusing youth development into the work of juvenile justice, we have confused being tough on crime with being tough on criminals, and in the process we have crippled a good portion of a generation of largely minority young people.

METHODOLOGY

We contacted researchers, policymakers, funders, and practitioners to identify 30 juvenile justice youth programs that displayed promising practices in preparing youthful offenders for

successful education and work-related outcomes. That list was subsequently pared to 15 sites by contacting each program for more information and then critically applying PEPNet criteria[2] for effective practice. Six of the 15 programs had received recognition from PEPNet, a project of NYEC that was formed to recognize and support an international network of effective youth employment initiatives and, in the process, to act as a mechanism for building knowledge and disseminating information to practitioners, policymakers, and the public on effective youth employment and development programming.

The PEPNet effective practices criteria are based on a matrix of standards that encompass five broad categories: purpose and activities, organization and management, youth development, workforce development, and evidence of success. The 15 programs were chosen based on application of those criteria and on the demonstration of exemplary practices. The PEPNet criteria were used because they examine youth employment programs through the lens of youth development principles that have been shown to provide long-term success for at-risk youth. And although not all 15 programs have been subjected to external evaluation, their methods, service delivery and management strategies, organizational ethos and missions, and staff and youth culture have been evaluated for a wide array of youth development commonalities and the actualization of an assets-based approach.

Each site was visited and subjected to a four-step evaluation. First, we toured the program's grounds and facilities to get a picture of what services were offered to participants, how services were delivered, and whether the environment was supportive to participants and conducive to the learning process.

Second, we conducted an extensive interview with each site director. This conversation explored the philosophy and mission of the program's educational and employment efforts; elicited specific information about what kind of academic instruction, vocational training, and support services the program delivered; and examined how programs accomplished the goals of imparting skills and providing services. The interviews also covered staff development, outcome measures, accountability, and other features that might have been unique to the program. We collected performance data on each to quantify the initiative's success at minimizing re-incarceration and providing positive educational and employment outcomes.

Third, we interviewed staff members to gain their perspective on the organization and its effectiveness. These interviews explored more fully the various facets of the program to determine whether staff members felt they were integral to the program's mission, believed they were empowered to strive for its successful attainment, and seemed truly dedicated to the improvement of the lives of at-risk youth.

Finally, we interviewed participants to get a sense of whether their expectations, experiences, and outcomes matched the observations of staff and program directors.

After the site visits, we prepared short reports, the results of which make up this section of the toolkit. The reports offered an overview of each program, identified the population and the point in the juvenile justice continuum at which it intervened, gave outcome data, and, most important, listed exemplary practices.

NOTES

[1]Task Force on Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth. *Employment Training for Court-Involved Youth.* Washington, D.C.: U.S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, November 2000. Online: www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/ojjdpreport_11_2000/index.html.

[2]For more information on PEPNet, visit www.nyec.org/pepnet, call 202-659-1064, or send a fax request to 202-659-0399.

AVON PARK YOUTH ACADEMY

OUTCOME DATA

Seventy-eight percent of Avon Park Youth Academy students complete the program; 40 percent earn GEDs or high school diplomas; 78 percent receive vocational certification; 81 percent remain employed after 6 months. Before the 2000 adoption of Street Smart, a postprogram support and follow-up initiative, the recidivism rate was about 17 percent; the current rate is below 10 percent.

OVERVIEW

Avon Park opened in 1998 as a private, 212-bed residential facility for 16- to 18-year-old male repeat offenders classified as "moderate risk" and sentenced by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice to a perimeter-secure facility —one that students may not leave without permission. Avon Park's 9-month-long program simulates real living as much as possible to prepare residents to hold jobs with living wages. The population is screened twice for physical and mental capacity to engage in rigorous vocational training and hands-on work experience.

Avon Park provides academics, job training, and life and community-living skills to facilitate self-sufficiency and permanency planning. Its programming seeks to balance the tension between security, freedom, and empowerment in a noninstitutional, homelike setting. Avon Park looks and feels more like a college campus than a correctional facility. Participants live in duplexes in groups of 8–10 that form small, intimate communities within the larger group, which is governed by a student-run council of elected officials.

Students do their own cooking, cleaning, laundry, and groundskeeping, and they can earn and schedule house activities and recreational events. Residents take personal responsibility for their daily affairs; they arrange their own schedules to account for academic and vocational training, work schedules, and group meetings; and they budget credits earned in the token economy system to purchase activities, campus store merchandise, and off-site outings. Students also receive intensive social and independent-living skill training that helps them relate to peers, maintain character, earn living wages, and manage income.

The vocational program emphasizes the development of positive workplace skills, beliefs, and behaviors. Residents train for the real working world as much as possible. Each has an employment counselor and a case manager to help with career exploration, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop career objectives. Each develops a career portfolio through which he produces a résumé, conducts a job search, interviews for jobs, and practices job readiness skills.

In the final third of their stay, participants receive wage-earning, work-based experience, either on-site or off, depending on behavioral performance. Certification is

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case example: **residential program** system point–target population: adjudication of youthful repeat offenders, aged 16–18 ■ contact: Derrick Witherspoon, Director ■ 242 South Boulevard ■ Avon Park, FL 33825 ■ 863-452-3815, 863-542-4302 fax ■ derrickwitherspoon@hotmail.com

available for the culinary arts, masonry, flooring, horticulture, plumbing, electricity, carpentry, building maintenance, landscaping, business, and auto mechanics. Once they obtain jobs, Avon Park residents must meet normal workplace standards for behavior, punctuality, job performance, and relationship and communication skills. Some participate in Homebuilders, an intensive training and building trades certification program.

Avon Park augments vocational training with academic work and with support structures, postprogram support, and follow-up. New Century software, which tailors reading, writing, and mathematics curricula to students' specific strengths, weakness, and educational needs, is used each day with instructor supervision. Students supplement this learning with individual and small-group work focused on tying academic skills to the workplace. Each student has a peer mentor and a counselor, and all participate in subject-specific group work (for example, for substance abuse issues) to develop the mental capacity to achieve academically and vocationally.

Avon Park Academy's support continues after graduation. A recent grant was used to create Street Smart, which provides support services for 12 months after students graduate. In their final 2 months in the program, residents work with staff members to develop transition plans and to find work. In this phase, residents find jobs, get drivers' licenses, find secure living situations, and either earn or are given a $500 stipend to start living independently. Street Smart transition specialists and community support workers help each former resident to support himself on the outside, and they offer referrals and support to help each young person maintain a decent standard of living. Implementation has coincided with a drop in the recidivism rat to below 10 percent.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Avon Park Academy's "normal" living and working environments prepare young offenders for release to the community. The academy adheres to its philosophy that the real-world approach is the best way to help students take responsibility for their lives while they are in the academy and after they leave.

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CAREER EXPLORATION PROJECT

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Center for Alternative Sentencing and
Employment Services
346 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-732-0076
www.cases.org

OUTCOME DATA

The Career Exploration Project (CexP) began in 1997 and has had more than 125 participants. Seventy-five percent have completed preinternships; 54 percent have completed internships. All graduates pursue high school diplomas, GEDs, or college. Almost 70 percent proceed to other jobs or internships, and almost half are working 6 months after graduation. Ninety-five percent of CExP participants complete the Court Employment Project, which provides young felony offenders with a structured, rigorous program of education, employment preparation, job placement, and counseling.

OVERVIEW

CExP provides alternative sentencing for first-time felony offenders who are placed in an intensive 6-month program that encompasses education, vocational training, personal development, and internship placement. The 15- to 19-year-old participants come from New York City's low-income neighborhoods. Sixty percent are African-American, 38 percent are Latino, and 10 percent are female.

CExP is a project of the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), which helps young offenders gain skill and self-confidence before they exit the justice system as responsible, productive members of their communities. CASES works to find fair, productive, and cost-effective alternatives to traditional sentencing. Applicants must be currently enrolled in an education program, and they apply through a personal essay and interview. Those who are selected are placed in one of four annual project cycles that serve 50–60 young people each year. The 6-month-long program begins with a month-long preinternship, followed by internship placement. Participants are supported and supervised throughout their work experience and through "alumni programming" after graduation.

Preinternship participants enter a 32-hour training program that helps them begin to identify career interests, assess skills and weaknesses, and develop communication skills. They write résumés, search for jobs, practice for interviews, gain experience in team building and problem solving, and learn conflict resolution skills for managing workplace frustrations. Participants must maintain 90 percent attendance and display competence and enthusiasm to receive internship placements.

Interns develop concrete job skills but they also learn about workplace cultures and obtain a clearer grasp of the role of education in career development. As they learn to identify

case example: **alternative sentencing** system point–target population: adjudication of first-time felony offenders, aged 15–17 ■ contact: Joe McLaughlin, Executive Director ■ 346 Broadway, 6th Floor ■ New York, NY 10013 ■ 212-553-6650, 212-553-6379 fax ■ mclaughlinj@cases.org

and pursue job networks, they gain self-confidence. An effort is made to place interns at sites that match their interests and cultural backgrounds. Employers are selected who will extend themselves to CExP participants and act as mentors. Placements have included Net Café, a minority owned cyber café; Soul Fixins, an African-American owned restaurant; and *Stress Magazine*, a hip-hop culture publication. During the school year, interns work 14 hours each week for 10 weeks to earn weekly stipends of $100. Summer employment is for 20 hours a week for 8 weeks; the stipend is $150. Participants have 2-hour meetings with staff members each Friday to discuss experiences, voice concerns, and listen to and meet with guest speakers who often provide further motivation and resources.

Project coordinators are participants' main points of contact. They develop close relationships with participants and act as mentors, teachers, and even friends. Case managers help participants comply with court mandates and develop individual service plans. Case managers attend mandatory training sessions on substance abuse education, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, the workings of the criminal justice system, and anger management. Participants in the Looking Ahead program are paired with New York University students and graduates, who act as mentors to help participants make the connection between school and positive work outcomes.

Staff members' mandatory training extends up to 25 hours and includes workshops on workplace issues, conflict management, professional ethics, and home-based family interventions. Training is tailored to staff needs and interests. Many staff members are CExP graduates who offer current participants their unique insights.

Once participants complete their internships, CExP staff members help with the transition to full-time employment or education. As alumni, participants can continue to use CASES services and are invited to guest lectures and other educational and recreational events.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

CExP does not simply train and educate young people in job-related skills; it establishes and formalizes opportunities for participants to build these new skills. By providing concrete work experience, CExP ensures that participants' new skills and insights are not wasted, but are channeled through work experience. Participants make a clear connection between education and work preparedness, and they come to terms with a work culture that often is antithetical to their past norms of behavior. Many of the program's role models are successful minority professionals. CExP provides support and supervision during participants' work experiences and after graduation so they can reflect on their experiences, learn from them, and use the knowledge and skills they have gained to set themselves on a productive educational and employment path.

CORRECTIONS CLEARINGHOUSE

OUTCOME DATA

In fiscal year 1997–1998, some 3080 inmates graduated from Corrections Clearinghouse (CCH) institutional courses. Nearly 1500 inmates got Social Security cards, 1500 obtained forms of identification, and about 200 registered with JobNet, the Washington state job bank. In 1996-1997, 1312 ex-offenders enrolled in work orientation programs; 776 of them were placed in jobs, and 151 were promoted to jobs with higher wages.

OVERVIEW

CCH is the branch of the Washington State Employment Security Department that works with corrections officials to provide services that motivate inmates and released prisoners to find employment instead of reoffending. CCH works with about half of the state's correctional institutions to provide services that include not just incarceration but also job placement and other postrelease services. CCH integrates academic and vocational training with job readiness and placement into a three-part program of direct, brokering, and coordinating services.

Direct services include institutional courses and postrelease job search assistance in the Ex-O Program for inmates from five adult and seven juvenile institutions. CCH staff members teach prerelease courses on Transitional Employment and Job Dynamics, and they offer vocational assessments. CCH also provides help with obtaining Social Security and state identification cards and with JobNet registration.

After release, ex-offenders get help through the Ex-O Program. The clearinghouse contracts with community organizations and with Employment Security Job Service Centers to provide job counseling, skills training, post-placement services, and advancement opportunities.

CCH collaborative efforts have included the establishment of the Corrections Alliance, which allocates the funds from the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1990 to correctional education programs; and the founding of VOTE (Vocational Opportunity Training and Education), a college program for ex-offenders in recovery from chemical dependency.

The most prominent example of CCH's coordinating services is the Access Washington Resource Directory (www.awrd.org), which lists 10,000 social service resources in the state of Washington, accessible by county, ZIP code, or type of service. The National Institute of Corrections has a database (www.nicic.org) that allows people in other parts of the country to conduct similar searches.

The CCH juvenile team has developed the Juvenile Vocational Industries Program (JVIP), a partnership of

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case example: **workforce development** system point–target population: adjudication of juvenile and adult offenders ■ contact: Douglas Jacques, Director ■ Washington State Employment Security Department ■ 605 Woodland Square Loop, SE, PO Box 9046 ■ Olympia, WA 98507 ■ 360-438-4060, 360-407-5218 fax ■ djacques@esd.wa.gov

local school districts, the state Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, and CCH, for offering vocational and industrial education to incarcerated youth. JVIP teaches work ethics through experience, and the program helps juvenile offenders pay restitution, room and board, federal taxes, and build up savings for their eventual release. Offenders learn to market themselves while they receive job training. They also gain an understanding of restorative justice—confronting the consequences of their actions and the pain they may have caused their victims—and learn personal accountability.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

One element that sets CCH apart is its comprehensive emphasis on providing a continuum of services: It works not just to help ex-offenders to get jobs or enter other programs, but it helps participants to continuously improve their economic and personal well-being. The Ex-O Program is a bridge for young offenders entering or re-entering the job market. All participants attend job readiness classes in the weeks before they leave a facility. They wear business attire and classes are conducted in a real-world manner that both impresses on participants the challenges they will soon face and prepares them to overcome obstacles to success. CCH's contracts with community-based organizations and Employment Security Job Service Centers provide ex-inmates with vocational assessments, help with writing résumés and interviewing, job searches, and career advancement. The release of inmates back into society thus becomes a communal process, although ex-offenders are expected to take personal responsibility for the decisions that govern their lives.

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CRISPUS ATTUCKS YOUTHBUILD

PARENT ORGANIZATION

YouthBuild USA
Dorothy Stoneman, Director
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Somerville, MA 02144
617-623-9900, 617-623-4359 fax
www.youthbuild.org/YBmain.html
Dstoneman@youthbuild.org

OUTCOME DATA

The Crispus Attucks YouthBuild Charter School ended the 1999–2000 year graduating 52 students who were once high school dropouts or had struggled in conventional schools. Overall, students maintained an 83.5 grade point average and an 81 percent attendance rate. Eight graduates received scholarships. The remaining graduating class entered the workforce at wages that averaged $7.86 per hour.

As of 1997, all students who demonstrated an 8th-grade reading level received a high school diploma. Graduates have a 5 percent recidivism rate among 74 percent previously involved in the juvenile justice system. Seventy-four percent of graduates are employed after graduation.

OVERVIEW

YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth and community development and alternative education program. YouthBuild runs on a 12-month cycle, offering job training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young adults, ages 16–24, through the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing in their own communities. YouthBuild USA helps to coordinate and support the various YouthBuild programs across the country.

The YouthBuild program in York, Pennsylvania, began in 1994, and the Crispus Attucks charter school was founded in May 1999. Crispus Attucks is now a 12-month day school that integrates the completion of a high school diploma with training and certification in the building trades. Crispus Attucks serves 60–120 students between the ages of 16 and 24. Its recruitment focuses on high school dropouts, nonviolent offenders, low-income young people, and those struggling to cope with mental and behavioral challenges. Twenty-two percent of the students are female, and 40 percent qualify for special education services.

Crispus Attucks prepares young people to become mentally tough by accepting responsibility for themselves, their families, and their communities. The program begins with a drug test, and because there is an 85 percent positive rate, it starts with 2 weeks of group sessions, life skills training, and personal responsibility training to begin the detoxification process. Drug counselors help students who continue to use drugs, and participants who are not drug-free do not graduate.

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population: juvenile offenders and at-risk youth, aged 16–24 ■ contact: Cynthia Dotson, YouthBuild Director ■ 605 South Duke Street ■ York, PA 17403 ■ 717-848-3610, 717-843-3914 fax ■ www.crispusattucks.org/YBCS.htm ■ Cdotson@crispusattucks.org

Crispus Attucks participates in several other collaborative projects, establishing solid relationships with judges, police and parole officers, and boot camps that provide discipline for youth with severe behavior problems. Construction employers offer suggestions for curriculum revisions and improvements, and they provide meaningful job opportunities for program graduates. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and AmeriCorps subsidize tuition for participants between the ages of 22 and 24 who are ineligible to attend a charter school. Nike, Inc., sponsors recreational activities and a basketball team.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Crispus Attucks is noteworthy for its creative use of incentives and rewards. First, by paying students real wages, the program helps participants connect hard work with meaningful results. But the program goes beyond this standard reward system by distributing wages based on weekly evaluations that communicate to participants that school and workplace behavior, beliefs, and cultural norms are just as instrumental to long-term success as are concrete job skills. Participants are thus motivated by the economic incentive, but they also become invested in their behavior in a way that allows for true and rapid learning.

Crispus Attucks offers participants core academic and vocational training. Each week, students alternate between job training and classroom work; half go to a construction site, and the others attend classes that include traditional academic subjects, counseling, and vocational soft-skills training. Students are paid for their academic work and their construction training, and they can earn up to $725 dollars a month rehabilitating low-income housing. Wages are based not only on hours worked and work performance, but also on weekly evaluations of development and display of positive workplace behaviors, beliefs, and values.

In support of the balance of restorative justice model—confronting and supporting the victims of crimes—a portion of student wages is attached for taxes, child support payments, and court-imposed fines. Crispus Attucks provides job placement, support, and follow-up after graduation. Individual Learning Accounts, which are matched-fund savings plans contributed to by employers and employees, provide a growing asset base to fund long-term education and training.

Students also participate in community service projects that reinforce positive behaviors, they receive counseling, and they work with mentors and participate in need-specific support groups. Crispus Attucks collaborates with a local community center, which provides on-site child care and offers referrals for health care, housing, domestic abuse assistance, and other social services.

CUNY CATCH

OUTCOME DATA

In 1999, CUNY Catch worked with more than 2000 young offenders at Rikers Island, New York City's main penal institution, and it offered educational and vocational programming for more than 500 participants at three college campuses. There is a 95 percent success rate for students who take the GED exam. Fifty percent of 1999 participants enrolled in college; the rest were provided with job placement assistance.

OVERVIEW

The CUNY (City University of New York) Catch Program was established in 1991 to provide transitional services for inmates returning from Rikers Island to their home communities. The program is a collaborative effort of the university, the state Department of Corrections, and the Board of Education. Through early intervention in prison and close collaboration with services at Rikers, CUNY Catch has helped inmates make the transition from jail to community-based campuses for continued counseling, training, and education. CUNY Catch complements, reinforces, and extends the academic and vocational training efforts that start at Rikers Island's high schools.

The program reaches about 3000 juveniles, offering outreach and programming for those who are detained and awaiting trial for a wide range of criminal offenses or who have been sentenced to less than a year at Rikers Island.

The program continues its effort after juveniles are released, working with 800 students in programs at Long Island's LaGuardia Community College, Bronx Community College, and Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn.

CUNY Catch offers workshops, seminars, and motivational programming for students at Rikers Island several days each week. A full-time transitional care specialist works as a permanent liaison between the university and the facility.

CUNY Catch staff members work to encourage enrollment in GED programs and vocational services and in the community college programs. Staff members try to maximize individual contact with Rikers students, so each one is given a card listing contact information. This helps the population to connect CUNY Catch with a face and a name.

Transition officers strive to demonstrate that there is a viable life beyond the correctional facility. They talk with participants about their dreams and goals and about CUNY's programs. Guest speakers and program graduates act as living testimony to the power of education and work experience. A creative writing professor works with participants to train them in written expression and to channel their ideas into practical visions for the future.

When young people return home from Rikers, they often face the same risks and institutional barriers to success that

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case example: **transitional program** system point–target population: juvenile ex-offenders, aged 16–18 ■ contact: Adolph Smith, Coordinator ■ 1150 Carroll Street, Room CP-27 ■ Brooklyn, NY 11125 ■ 718-270-6478 ■ www.mec.cuny.edu/academic_affairs/continuing_ed/ext_prgms/workforce/cuny_catch.htm

led them to crime in the first place. Catch staff members motivate the young people to develop legal options for gainful employment.

CUNY Catch offers ex-offenders academic and vocational assistance and referral services on three college campuses. The postrelease program includes a small-group GED preparation class that helps ex-offenders to earn certification, learn the soft skills they need in the workplace, and apply to college. Students generally are given as much time as they need to prepare for the GED exam, but the program sets high standards and constantly pushes participants to take responsibility for their beliefs and behaviors. GED program participants are welcome to use various college resources: the library, computer labs, recreational facilities, day care services, and guidance counseling.

During and after their enrollment in the GED program, students are assisted with finding jobs and applying to college. CUNY staff members offer job-readiness training that includes résumé writing and interview skills. Staff members make a conscious effort to help young people work on daily behavior: how to greet people, make eye contact, carry themselves, and communicate.

CUNY Catch offers referrals to meet needs beyond vocational training and education. Collaborative efforts include work with New York's Covenant House, a transitional-living facility; substance abuse counseling; and mentoring for ex-offenders.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

CUNY Catch reaches young offenders while they are incarcerated to promote successful transitions from institutional living. The estimated recidivism rate for Rikers Island's ex-inmates is 70–80 percent. And most young people return to New York communities to face the same pressures, lack of hope and opportunity, and personal problems that led them to Rikers in the first place. CUNY Catch's work combats this reality with education, job readiness training, and support. Staff members often make appointments with young offenders while they are still inside Rikers so that, immediately upon release, young offenders know there is a place to go for help with active, voluntary steps to protect their own futures.

Principals at Rikers Island high schools credit CUNY Catch's commitment to outreach with providing the most consistent, positive message the young people receive. The staff members do more than just show up: Their workshops and seminars are based on respect for the youth they serve—their needs, their desires, and their ability to focus on positive information. Staff members challenge the young people to think and act according to high standards. And as the young people become motivated and educated, they are given a concrete promise for a brighter future. Incarcerated youth often lead lives of broken promises—their own included. The most compelling evidence of CUNY Catch's effectiveness is that young offenders who serve time in Upstate New York facilities often go to the CUNY Catch program based on contact they had on Rikers Island years before.

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DAYTON YOUTHBUILD

PARENT ORGANIZATION

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OUTCOME DATA

Eighty-seven percent of Dayton, Ohio, YouthBuild students get jobs, join the military, or continue their education. The school follows up with students for 5 years, providing continued support and guidance.

OVERVIEW

Established in 1999 as a charter school, Dayton YouthBuild is part of YouthBuild USA, a comprehensive youth and community development program that provides alternatives to incarceration (although many students attend voluntarily) and offers academic instruction and training in the building trades. Three-quarters of the participants are 16 to 17 years old, but the group ranges from 16 to 24. Fifty-seven percent of participants are African-American; 43 percent are white. One quarter of the group is female, and 10–15 percent qualify for special education services.

Dayton YouthBuild's 12-month cycle includes job training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities for unemployed and out-of-school youth. Participants work in construction and rehabilitation of low-income housing in their own communities. The 4-quarter school year is divided into 11-week units, and the goal is to have students complete high school rather than pass the GED. The program is competency based, rather than unit based, so students may leave as soon as they gain the necessary skills. Students are referred to the program and then assessed to determine their skills and interests.

The first 6-week period is dedicated to education. Students spend mornings in classes and afternoons at work so the skills they acquire have immediate relevance. The next 5 weeks are spent working with a vocational curriculum approved for use at work sites by the National Center for Education and the Economy. Dayton YouthBuild focuses on helping students obtain building trades certification from community colleges. Particular to the Dayton program is Improved Solutions for Urban Systems Trade and Technology Prep. This partnership between business, technology companies, educators, and social service providers gives young people meaningful trade, construction, and technology-based work experience. Currently, about 300 students are enrolled; half of them were referred by

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population: juvenile offenders and at-risk youth, aged 16–24 ■ contact: Ann Higdon, Executive Director ■ 100 North Jefferson, Suite 602 ■ Dayton, OH 45402 ■ 937-223-2323, 937-223-9303 fax ■ lsusinc@aol.com

juvenile courts. Students repair and rebuild abandoned homes for low-income families, helping both to add to the affordable-housing stock and to improve their communities.

Dayton YouthBuild integrates work and the academic curriculum, so students gain practical job skills as they receive an education, develop life skills, and learn the soft skills they need to work outside the program. Academic credit is transferable to community college.

Three on-site counselors, a special education teacher, and a substance abuse counselor provide support. Staff members are trained to connect to participants academically, socially, and emotionally, and their diversity reflects that of program participants. Dayton YouthBuild collaborates with the juvenile justice system, Sinclair Community College, the Rotary Club, and other organizations. Many graduates go on to construction-related jobs or to college. Alumni receive postprogram counseling.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Dayton YouthBuild combines academic education, vocational training, work-based experience, and the principles associated with a balance of restorative justice. Participants prepare for real-world experiences by focusing on all aspects of their educational, vocational, and personal development. Their hands-on projects allow them to connect what they learn in the classroom with real work and to understand the value of education in concrete terms.

Dayton YouthBuild emphasizes the importance of understanding the economy and the various industries in which participants might work. The Improved Solutions for Urban Systems program unites the academic, business, and technology communities. Finally, Dayton YouthBuild helps young people to understand how their actions affect others by allowing them to produce work that has a direct, positive effect on low-income communities.

FERRIS SCHOOL FOR BOYS

OUTCOME DATA

On average, students at the Ferris School for Boys exhibit a 3.5-grade increase in reading and a 2-grade increase in math scores over 6 months. Eighty percent complete the GED.

OVERVIEW

Eighty-eight adjudicated boys, ages 13–18, are sentenced to this secure facility for 6–9 months at a time. This 5-year-old program has Middle States accreditation, and 99 percent of students are adjudicated from family court. The program operates in a Level 5 secure-care facility for serious offenders, and it offers comprehensive educational and support services.

Residents typically are repeat offenders for drug- and alcohol-related crimes, robbery, or violent offenses. The racial composition fluctuates: The population in the fall of 2001 was approximately 60 percent African-American, 20 percent white, and 20 percent Latino.

The Ferris School curriculum is set up in 3-week modules, and students are evaluated at the end of each. Students progress through the program—from orientation to advanced and honors classes—based on those evaluations and on weekly behavioral and emotional check-ups. Peer support and a system of increasing privileges are used to motivate students to advance. The school uses small-group academic instruction—the student-to-staff ratio is usually 8:1—tailored to students' personal needs. Sixty percent of Ferris students qualify for special education services, and the program is carefully designed to engage them in a learning process that will improve their academic performance rapidly.

Students also prepare for workforce entry in an 18-week program that teaches decision-making and soft and hard skills. Students complete various tests and measures that help them to explore career interests. Classrooms have computers, and there is a computer lab where students can develop marketable job skills.

Ferris has arts and sports programs, recognition assemblies, and cultural events such as diversity month. Townhouse-type housing allows students to feel they are a part of a community and can participate in the development of the program. Ferris emphasizes community service through various projects, such as providing landscaping services and visiting retirement communities.

A critical feature of the Ferris School program is participation in HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed), which connects each boy with a mentor. HOSTS is a nationwide reading and math program that seeks to dramatically improve the academic, social, and emotional growth of students who are at risk of failing or dropping out of school. The program began in Vancouver, Washington, in

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case example: **residential program** system point–target population: adjudication of boys, aged 13–18 ■ contact: Delores Mcintyre, Principal ■ 959 Center Road ■ Wilmington, DE 19805 ■ 302-993-3858, 302-993-3820 fax

1971 under the auspices of the Vancouver School District. HOSTS expanded and became independent in 1977. Its programs have served more than 1 million students across the United States and in El Salvador.

Ferris School's staff members must have bachelor's degrees and state certification in special education in their subject area. Staff development is emphasized through 5–6 days each year dedicated to program development, training, and improvement. Exit interviews are part of protocol. Staff members also have access to a professional library.

Legislators and local business people often are invited to meetings at the facility or to become principal for a day. Ferris hosts community meetings, and there are biweekly meetings with parents. The school maintains a close relationship with the State Department of Education.

Before they are released, students participate in a transition program in Level 4 security. During this period, they begin to interact with the community as they make the transition into work, fulfill community service requirements, and use home passes. After completing Ferris, students return to school or find jobs. Students are monitored by probation officers and receive postprogram support and services.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

The mentoring partnership between the Ferris School and the DuPont Company as part of the HOSTS program is the first of its kind in the nation to benefit incarcerated students. DuPont employees are trained by HOSTS to work one-on-one with students, and the company funds the program. Mentors volunteer for at least 1 hour each week, and they are trained to use students' lesson plans. Because mentors work with Ferris students for 6–9 weeks, students are exposed to adults who are not just academic tutors, but confidants, supporters, and friends, while they are away from home.

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FRESH START

OUTCOME DATA

In 1999, average attendance for Fresh Start was 95 percent. Math aptitude increased 1.2 grade levels, and language arts skill increased 1.8 levels. More than 75 percent of participants returned to school or were employed 6 months after completion, and the re-incarceration rate was below 10 percent.

OVERVIEW

Fresh Start is a 9-month-long, project-based education and vocational training program for 20–30 offenders, aged 16–20. Participants are male and female and predominantly African-American. They are referred from the Department of Juvenile Justice based on history of criminal violations, emotional or physical victimization, and educational or economic disadvantage.

Fresh Start structures staff directives, programming, and core principles on the philosophy that self-esteem comes through achievement: Participants succeed if they are pushed to achieve and are given the practical experience necessary to transform potential and desire into skills and self-confidence. The Fresh Start experiential learning program in maritime and construction trades helps students develop skills, behaviors, and attitudes that are appropriate to the workplace.

The group follows a schedule of 8-week modules. Participants must commit to the program, and tardiness within the first 2 weeks is grounds for expulsion. Each day, students spend 90 minutes in formal academic instruction, including GED preparation; the balance of their time is spent working. One early module, Tool Box, builds student proficiency with hand tools. Once a student demonstrates competence with a given tool, the tool goes into the box. By the end of the 8 weeks, that student should have a complete set for use throughout the rest of the program.

In the Production module, students work in all phases of Fresh Start's chair- and boat-building companies. These for-profit businesses are completely student run (a different student foreman is appointed each day to supervise operations), and they emulate the real workplace as much as possible. Participants must adhere to a strict attendance policy, demonstrate appropriate behavior, and complete daily assignments that can run from construction to advertising design to financial planning.

Students learn concrete skills at the same time they learn the value of collaborative work. To succeed and advance, they must draw on resources and support provided by teachers and their peers.

Two aspects of Fresh Start reinforce its vocational focus: self-evaluation and support structures. Students' behavior is

case example: **workforce development** system point–target population: adjudication of young offenders, aged 16–20 ■ contact: Greg Rapisarda, Director ■ Living Classrooms Foundation ■ Lighthouse at Pier 5, 717 Eastern Avenue ■ Baltimore, MD 21202 ■ 410-685-0295, 410-752-8433 fax ■ www.livingclassrooms.org ■ Greg@livingclassrooms.org

tracked daily, and progress through the program is charted with a point system based on self-evaluation. The evaluative measures were developed with input from employers about the behaviors, skills, and attitudes they want to see in employees: the ability to cooperate and stay on task, to produce a high-quality product, and to maintain professionalism. Participants rate their progress each day and review their efforts with instructors. Students' weekly point totals are measured against goals, which are increased quarterly during the program. Points determine basic privileges and are used as markers to divide business profits among the group.

Fresh Start extends individualized support and plans of instruction to all students. There is a 1:5 teacher–student ratio, so everyone has meaningful contact in every aspect of the program. Staff members are hired based on their commitment to youth development, their vocational expertise, and their past job performance. They are trained in conflict management, positive feedback techniques, and how to guide the self-evaluation process. They meet weekly to respond to student needs. All of this allows staff members and students to develop strong, productive relationships.

Students meet weekly with counselors to discuss individual treatment plans. And at the beginning and end of each day, students meet to express their concerns and desires. Fresh Start works with each participant to develop a personal transition plan that identifies specific goals. Retention specialists, who provide 3 years of postprogram support, staff a workforce development center. Students are placed in internships toward the end of their stay, and they move on to viable employment and are referred to external support services. Longer term participants act as role models and mentors for initiates.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

As an assets-based program, Fresh Start places workplace power in the hands of participants. The students are directly accountable for the success of the company—they are management and labor—so they make direct connections between work and profit. Participants are not taught simply the value of work; they learn the value of developing appropriate personal and professional standards.

As one program director said, Fresh Start doesn't decide what participants can or cannot achieve: It allows them to discover their own potential and their own will to meet expectations and produce results.

FRIENDS OF ISLAND ACADEMY

OUTCOME DATA

Those who complete the program have less than a 17 percent rate of reconviction; 60 percent obtain a GED.

OVERVIEW

Friends of Island Academy (FOIA) is a private, nonprofit organization that provides educational, vocational, leadership, and life skills training and a system of supports and mentoring for about 350 ex-offenders, largely from Rikers Island, a New York City correction facility. Participants are between the ages of 10 and 21. Sixty percent are African-American, 39 percent are Latino, 12 percent are female, and 80 percent are below the poverty level.

FOIA welcomes, empowers, inspires, and challenges young people to take responsibility, first for themselves and later for their peers and communities. FOIA emphasizes its community atmosphere and sets standards and expectations for all participants. FOIA provides a caring, compassionate environment that challenges while nurturing and supporting each young person.

FOIA assistance and services begin on Rikers Island. Former youthful offenders, hired as staff members, conduct workshops directed at encouraging those who will be released to take responsibility for their own development and, once they are free, to participate in FOIA's programs. Participants complete Milestones plans, charting their previous and future life courses.

FOIA offers a range of comprehensive services. In conjunction with the Board of Education, participants may enroll in GED training. Basic literacy training is offered as well, because 75 percent of incarcerated young people read below an 8th-grade level. Participants also can learn about word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and how to use the Internet. There are referrals to alternative high schools and to the City University of New York system. College preparatory classes are offered, as are modest scholarships to continue or enhance education.

FOIA offers job readiness training and opportunities to participate in creative and recreational activities. The job readiness course includes role-playing, résumé writing, how to fill out a job application, how to dress appropriately, and how to interview successfully. A full-time job developer–employment coordinator helps participants find and apply for work. Young people participate in sports leagues, go to movies and museums, and a couple of times a year work with a poet in residence to produce a book of poems that is read at the Donnell Library in Manhattan.

Participants have access to counseling services and mentoring relationships, and they meet individually or in groups in a class called the "think tank" to discuss interpersonal

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case example: **voluntary transitional programming**

system point-target population: ex-offenders, aged 10–21 ■ contact: Clinton Lacey, Director ■ 500 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1209 ■ New York, NY 10018 ■ 212-760-0755, 212-760-0766 fax ■ www.foiany.org

relationships, anger management, conflict resolution, stress and harm reduction, health care, substance abuse, sexuality, bereavement, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. Because so many incarcerated youth exhibit signs of mental illness and depression, FOIA has expanded its referral network to include community psychiatrists and in-patient psychiatric facilities.

FOIA recruits and intensively trains community volunteers and pairs them with the ex-offenders who come to the program. Mentors meet with participants each week, and they receive biweekly institutional support from FOIA about how to most effectively connect with and assist program participants. The result has been a needed source of role modeling, compassion, and companionship that pays off in improved educational and vocational outcomes for young offenders.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

In addition to their academic, vocational, and life skills training, FOIA youth are empowered to become community leaders and advocates for positive values and behavior. FOIA gives them a chance to use their skills, talents, and voices to promote social change and to develop peer relationships in a supportive, positive environment. Each week, meetings and workshops address social and personal issues in participants' lives. Speakers, special trips, and cultural and recreational opportunities help to strengthen the group's ties and provide positive social outlets.

An extension of the youth leadership program is the GIIFT Pack (Guys and Girls Insight on Imprisonment for Teens), which offers peer-to-peer education to 2000 young people each year about the perils of street life and the hard realities of incarceration. GIIFT Pack participants are trained by FOIA staff to share their experiences and communicate in a way that provides insight to at-risk youth about ways to distance themselves from the beliefs and behaviors that limit success. Members work in small groups to reach out to public schools and community-based organizations several times each week. They attend monthly planning meetings, and GIIFT Pack participants have been incorporated as permanent members of the guidance offices of two South Bronx schools.

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GULF COAST TRADES CENTER

OUTCOME DATA

A 2000 study by the Texas Youth Commission reported that Gulf Coast Trades Center graduates have a re-arrest rate of 16 percent. The rate for group home programs is 26.5 percent, it's 54.7 percent for other contract programs, and it's 60.9 percent for Texas Youth Commission state institutions. Eighty-four percent of the students enrolled between September 1999 and August 2000 completed the program, and 70 percent of those young people had jobs that paid an average of $6.25 per hour.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1971 through a cooperative effort between the City of Houston, the AFL-CIO, and other groups, Gulf Coast Trades Center is a residential program for juvenile offenders, aged 16–19. The program is comprehensive but focuses largely on vocational training and skill development. In 1998–1999, Gulf Coast served about 200 juvenile offenders who were referred predominantly from Houston, San Antonio, and the surrounding rural areas.

The Gulf Coast Trades Center increases the social and economic independence of disadvantaged youth, based on a philosophy that stresses the worth and dignity of each person and the belief that the strengths existing within the individual can be directed toward maturity and responsible citizenship. Participants are sent to the center for 9-month periods. They advance through the program's four levels by exhibiting specific behaviors and accountability. Participants receive incentives that include recreational opportunities and off-site excursions.

Student activities are focused in the chartered, diploma-granting Raven School, where the curriculum emphasizes vocational development, skills training, multimedia learning opportunities, and community service. Students spend most of their time in small classes learning to develop the positive beliefs, behaviors, and the soft and hard skills they need to succeed in the workplace. Young offenders supplement skill building with practical experience in construction, auto maintenance, painting and decorating, business and technology, and the culinary arts.

Gulf Coast students participate in a YouthBuild low-income housing project, and they learn to work with computers and audiovisual equipment. They get drivers' licenses, they start savings accounts, and they complete community service requirements that demonstrate the connection between personal action and community well-being.

Gulf Coast students receive formal academic training and learn through a multimedia approach that is both relevant and engaging. They use video and audio equipment and innovative computer software to assess their academic and vocational abilities and interests. Instruction includes GED and SAT preparation. Students also receive skills training and take part in entrepreneurial and leadership

case example: **residential program** System Point–Taget Population: adjudication of juvenile offenders, aged 16–19 ■ contact: Thomas Mike Buzbee ■ PO Box 515 ■ New Waverly, TX 77358 ■ 936-344-6677, 936-344-2386 fax ■ www.gctcw.org ■ gctc@gctcw.org

activities that help them integrate and reinforce their other areas of learning.

The Raven School provides independent- and transitional-living classes, substance abuse education, gang seminars, career and college exploration, and driver education. Students also can choose to join a youth council that plans community events and projects, acts as youth court, and offers consultation to the Board of Directors to ensure that board decisions include the voices and concerns of young people.

Gulf Coast offers various support structures, including postprogram assistance. Participants' caseworkers help them devise individual treatment plans that are reviewed monthly. Students also participate in nightly group sessions that serve both as an evaluation tool and as a place to build relationships and vent emotions. After completing the program, graduates receive assistance for more than a year, first for finding jobs and then for advancing up the employment ladder. Gulf Coast offers a special aftercare program for young offenders struggling to deal with being on parole. The center participates in operating emergency shelters that can help ex-offenders make the transition to independent living.

The Gulf Coast Trades Center staff is ethnically diverse, highly qualified, and truly committed to the growth and development of young people. Staff members receive at least 40 hours of training each year on a range of issues, including counseling, safety, and crisis intervention. The center measures such aggregated outcomes as grade level gains, GED awards, participants employed at completion (and average wage), homes constructed, number in transitional living, and participants in leadership programs. Program progress is reviewed weekly and monthly, and the Board of Trustees receives quarterly reports. Contracting agencies monitor student progress through regular monthly audits. "Big picture" outcomes are publicized in the center's newsletter and in quarterly and annual reports.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

The Gulf Coast Trades Center's strong record of success is tied to identifying the strengths of its students and giving them hands-on, empowering work to do. Programs help the students identify and improve their strengths, and they are held accountable for their actions through nightly self-evaluations and a level system that rewards positive behavior. They profit from their success, academically, vocationally, and financially, and they are allowed the individual creativity and flexibility to meet personal goals.

MAYOR'S JUVENILE JUSTICE ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Mayor's Juvenile Justice Action Plan (MJJAP), San Francisco, California, has six programs that provide intensive services across the juvenile justice continuum. MJJAP targets young people at risk of becoming serious, chronic offenders and those who are entrenched in the juvenile justice system.

The Mayor's Criminal Justice Council originally met with 100 youth service providers and 400 stakeholders in the juvenile justice system to create the Comprehensive Action Plan for Juvenile Justice. The plan covers reciprocal restitution, continuous accountability, training and technical assistance, competency and character development, and "surround services"—comprehensive supports designed to address all of a young person's needs.

The plan was to target at-risk young people through prevention activities and current offenders through rehabilitation. A joint effort among public and private agencies led to the programs: the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC), the Life Learning Academy, Bayview Safe Heaven, Early Risk and Resiliency, Mission Safe Corridor, and the Life Learning Residential Center for Girls.

CARC is an alternative to juvenile hall for 11- to 17-year-olds arrested for a variety of criminal offenses. After contacting an arrested juvenile's family, CARC is a single point of entry for developing an individual plan of intervention, assessment, public and community-based service integration, and referral. Each young person also is assigned a case manager and a mentor.

The Life Learning Academy is a diploma-granting, extended-day charter school for 60 students. Its project-based curriculum includes academic studies, the arts, social and vocational skills, and conflict management. The academy requires a high degree of competence from its students in the basic academic subjects, but its project-based curriculum helps them make connections between classroom learning and the skills and abilities they need to succeed in the real world.

Academy students major in one of the four elements—air, water, earth, and fire—and daily lessons, activities, and vocational experiences are structured around these themes. Water majors study oceanography and marine biology, for example, and they learn boat repair and sailing, participate in swimming and scuba classes, visit aquariums and marine laboratories, and work closely with the Treasure Island harbormaster and the Maritime Museum. The academy stresses peer leadership, earned responsibility and privilege, community service, and art and environmental education. Students also participate in interpersonal groups and mentoring.

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case example: **intake, assessment, and intervention**

system point–target population: at-risk youth and chronic offenders, aged 10–18 ■ contact: Mimi Silbert, President ■ Delancey Street Foundation, 600 Embarcadero ■ San Francisco, CA 94107 ■ 415-512-5190, 415-512-5186 fax

Bayview Safe Haven is an after-school program for at-risk youth enrolled voluntarily or as a condition of probation. Safe Haven provides academic assistance, a bicycle repair program, art and environmental education, organized sports, and outings to cultural and recreational events. Each student is assigned a mentor who provides one-on-one support and guidance.

Early Risk and Resiliency works with middle schools, city agencies, and community-based providers to identify young people at risk of chronic criminal behavior. Student assessments identify strengths and talents and help participants maximize these areas to overcome deficits. The program links young people to community organizations and provides follow-up case management.

Mission Safe Corridor reduces crime in the Mission Street area by increasing law enforcement presence. Members of the Serious Offenders' Supervision Team—a probation officer, an outreach worker, and a police officer—collaborate to enforce curfews for young people on probation. Mission Safe Haven, an after-school program, provides an alternative to the streets.

The Life Learning Residential Center for Girls serves a 14- to 17-year-old population. They receive academic, vocational, and interpersonal training, and they focus on realistic family or residential aftercare plans.

Each program is subjected to comprehensive, independent evaluation that includes pre- and postintervention assessment and case–control studies. Baseline data are gathered on participants at the time of entry, and follow-up information is gathered at 6-month intervals. Data elements include school attendance and performance, recidivism, probation status, and substance abuse. The earlist assessments suggested that participants show improvements in performance-based outcomes and in emotional and psychosocial development.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

MJJAP provides a broad range of services to arrested juveniles who need crisis intervention, assessment, and social services, and it offers prevention services and education to at-risk youth. Unlike many youth-serving organizations MJJAP does not operate in a limited scope and its structure does allow some control over what happens to young people after they move on from a specific program. CARC's mentors and case managers provide a critical brokering service for young people and their families who must navigate the criminal justice and social service bureaucracies.

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OMEGA BOYS CLUB

OUTCOME DATA

The Omega Boys Club has 11 institutes with 160 graduates and 70 college graduates. Its participants received more than $250,000 annually in scholarships. Listeners across the country have heard the Omega message on Street Soldiers Radio, a syndicated talk show with 39 affiliates and an audience estimated at a half-million listeners.

OVERVIEW

The California-based Omega Boys Club is a violence prevention organization that offers young people information, skills training, outreach, counseling, and scholarships to help keep them alive and free. It serves young adults in 28 urban communities across the country and accomplishes its goal through preventive care in schools and with the work of volunteers to the program. About one-third of Omega participants are referred by the juvenile justice system. Omega serves young people throughout the juvenile justice continuum.

Omega has 57 projects across the country that use its Street Soldiers methodology to help young people overcome the disease of violence; this program also aims at rehabilitation by helping young people to develop beliefs and behaviors that promote personal growth and development. Omega's philosophy is not based on work or school attendance as solutions; rather, it focuses on preparing young people psychologically to meet and overcome the challenges of life.

After a decade of research, Omega developed a three-step program, offered in once-a-week classes in a 36-week college preparatory course that includes academic and life skills training. Its support structures include counseling, assistance in continuing education, college scholarships, and follow-up for those released from the juvenile justice system. The Omega Institute and the International Training and Replication Program train youth service providers. A book, film, and radio program spread the Street Soldiers message nationwide.

The 36-week course is divided into separate, 90-minute sessions for girls and boys, and it reaches 120–150 young people at a time. The sessions are taught by Omega's executive and assistant directors, and they use young people's language, hip-hop music and culture, urban videos, community-based issues, and ethnic culture and history to engage participants in self-analysis of behavior and belief.

More specifically, the class cycles through themes that include respect, friendship versus "fearship," and media images. The program thus helps young people understand the urban survival disease that leads to incarceration or death, it allows them to identify risk factors that spread the "germs" of the disease, and it leads them to develop new rules for living that promote long-term economic self-sufficiency.

case example: **violence reduction** system point–target population: outreach to at-risk youth ■ contact: Joe Marshall, Director ■ PO Box 884463 ■ San Francisco, CA 94188 ■ 415-826-8664, 415-826-8673 fax ■ www.street-soldiers.org ■ drj@street-soldiers.org

Omega offers a weekly college preparation class for high school seniors who need help with schoolwork, filling out college applications, or submitting financial aid forms. Participants who show a long-term commitment to the program and who demonstrate leadership receive college scholarships.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Omega is unique in its approach to teaching young people to break the cycle of violence through new rules for living. The task is accomplished through the academic program, which teaches adolescents to analyze the codes of the street and the messages they receive from the media, and through its radio presence.

PROJECT RIO–Y

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OUTCOME DATA

In 2001, Project RIO–Y (Re-Integration of Offenders–Youth) served 1638 young offenders and referred 840 to the Texas Work Commission for employment assistance; 65 percent of that group gained employment. Within 31 days of release from a Texas Youth Commission facility, 76 percent of Project RIO–Y participants were engaged in a constructive activity, which the project defines as part-time employment, school enrollment, or technical training.

OVERVIEW

Project RIO–Y provides incarcerated young people with skills assessment, job training, personal development training, and postrelease job referral services. The project draws its participants from 16- to 21-year-olds who have been sentenced by the courts to the Texas Youth Commission for crimes that range from capital offenses to drug use to sexual offenses. Participants enroll voluntarily, and they must do so at least six months before their release dates. A staff recommendation is required. In 1998, RIO–Y's population was mostly male. Approximately 40 percent were African-American, 40 percent were Latino, and 20 percent were white.

RIO–Y provides incarcerated youth with postrelease career-training opportunities and with the skills they need to find and keep employment as productive members of society. A rehabilitation program called Resocialization stresses correctional therapy, education, work, and discipline training to help young offenders develop a sense of personal responsibility for past and future actions. The process is divided into two main areas of programming: youth development and career exploration–workforce development.

Workforce development combines career exploration with job readiness training to help young offenders find jobs that provide living wages and that reflect and support their interests and talents. Students use several classroom tools for career exploration, including Magellan Explorer and Texas C.A.R.E.S software, which help them match interests with occupations and allow them to explore educational and vocational opportunities in their home communities.

RIO–Y participants receive pre-employment training in skills and values that help ensure workplace success. First,

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case example **workforce development** system point–target population: adjudication of incarcerated young offenders, ages 16–21 ■ contact: Burt Ellison, Project Director ■ Texas Workforce Commission ■ 101 East Fifteenth Street, Room 506T ■ Austin, TX 78778 ■ 512-463-0834, 512-936-3090 fax ■ Bellison@twc.state.tx.us

participants reflect on their experiences and identify the job-related skills they already possess. Then they follow the basic steps to employment: how to write a résumé, fill out a job application, and interview successfully. When they are released, participants must pass skills tests to ensure competency before they are referred to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or a similar work agency. TWC employment specialists help RIO–Y graduates find jobs and they administer federal and state tax credits for participating employers.

Project RIO–Y participants receive training in civic responsibility, social engagement, self-assessment, goal setting, and conflict management through a comprehensive set of integrated educational modules that reinforce the value of education, hard work, and social supports as pathways to success. Students learn in the classroom, through formal counseling relationships, in informal mentoring relationships, and in the continuous development of relationships with family and peers. Project RIO–Y imparts universal values within a multicultural approach but it tailors the curriculum to the individual needs and desires of each participant.

Project RIO–Y imposes significant responsibilities on staff members, youth participants, and the organization itself. The project's leaders know that youth service providers must strive for accountability from staff members and participants, and they must measure outcomes in clear, consistent terms.

Project RIO–Y staff members attend mandatory annual training sessions that help them improve or develop a more intuitive sense of how to best provide social services. The subject matter includes ethics and confidentiality, issues surrounding AIDS and HIV, treatment options, and workforce and youth development.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

Project RIO–Y participants are expected to demonstrate competence in several areas before they graduate. They are pre- and post-tested about workforce knowledge, and they must demonstrate an appreciable increase in their information base. In addition, they must be able to accurately complete an employment application, develop a résumé, exhibit acceptable interview skills that are videotaped and critiqued, prepare and present 30-second commercials about themselves, and show they can respond effectively to employers' questions concerning their past offenses.

Project RIO–Y evaluates its program monthly for employment rates among participants and for ways of engaging them in constructive activities.

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TAMPA MARINE INSTITUTE

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Associated Marine Institutes
5915 Benjamin Center Drive
Tampa, FL 33634
www.ami-fl.org
info@ami-fl.org

OUTCOME DATA

Sixty-six percent of Tampa Marine Institute (TMI) participants receive a favorable discharge. The 12 percent recidivism rate is the lowest among 20 programs run by Associated Marine Institutes, the parent organization.

OVERVIEW

The private, nonprofit TMI is a nonresidential program for offenders who enter a 9-month-long course of educational, vocational, and personal training. The student-to-staff ratio is 8:1. TMI usually has 45 Level 2 (minor offender) male and female participants between the ages of 14 and 18 who mostly have committed property offenses. Students are referred by the Department of Juvenile Justice or a local school system. TMI's maritime training in aquatics, seamanship, navigation, mapping, commercial fishing, and scuba is particularly useful in Tampa's commercial fishing and shrimping job market.

Participants meet daily with individual advisors to track progress and discuss issues. Students also interact informally with adult role models, including the executive director and other staff in leadership positions, forming supportive relationships that extend beyond TMI itself. When someone misses school or has a tough day, staff members follow up to determine the difficulty and help find solutions. Staff members meet each month with families to engage them as much as possible in the growth and development of program participants.

All TMI participants receive core academic instruction, for which they earn high school credit. TMI encourages all students to finish high school or complete the GED. TMI students use the New Century software to analyze educational strengths and deficits and to arrange tutorial programs based on specific needs. In the process, they acquire basic computer skills they will be able to apply professionally.

The core curriculum also includes life and social skills. Students learn interpersonal communication, the nature of respect, anger management, and conflict resolution. They attend group sessions for substance abuse counseling or parent training, for example, based on individual need. A psychologist offers additional support. TMI also offers instruction in soft skills, and participants learn résumé writing, how to apply for a job, and what to do in an interview. Job placement assistance is provided.

case example: **nonresidential program** system point–target population: adjudication of young offenders, aged 14–18 ■ contact: Michael Thornton, Executive Director ■ 2015 Guy N. Verger Boulevard ■ Tampa, FL 33605 ■ 813-248-5091, 813-247-3998 fax ■ mt-tmi@mindspring.com

TMI uses a point card system to determine level placement and corresponding privileges. Personal conduct, attitude, and performance are measured, and points are traded for recreational outings and access to the maritime program.

New staff members complete an 80-hour orientation, shadow veteran staff members, and learn counseling skills. All staff members participate in monthly training programs, and each has an individual training plan. A staff meeting each morning reviews the past day's successes and failures and outlines the current day's objectives.

Staff members work together, with the students, and with family members to refine and improve individual treatment plans for each young adult. Each staff member is an advisor for a small group, acting as a resource person and a friend to group members. Staff members devote time, thought, and energy—individually and as a team—to interacting with TMI program participants in a way that challenges them to uphold high standards for their own behavior.

TMI participants receive 6 months of support and follow-up after they leave the program in conjunction with Project SAFE (Student And Family Enhancement). SAFE also offers postprogram support to Level 8–10 participants (serious offenders who have commited crimes such as murder or assault) in transition from residential facilities. Young offenders meet with SAFE staff members before they leave their facilities, and SAFE picks them up from the facilities to begin working with them to stabilize their lives as soon as they return home. Participants are referred to service providers for health care, substance abuse counseling, and day care, for example. Staff members offer support 7 days a week for at least 3 months and, in conjunction with TMI, run an alternative school for students who are ineligible to return to local schools. SAFE staff members provide support, follow-up, and crisis management for at least a year—longer if necessary. And there is a continuing-education fund for young people who show promise and dedication.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

TMI has an extremely low recidivism rate. It provides high-quality educational and vocational opportunities for young people, although that in itself is not sufficient to guarantee such a positive outcome. TMI is notable for its emphasis on hiring high-quality staff members; for facilitating staff development, communication, and relationships; and for providing support, compassion, and respect to youthful offenders. The institute's foundations are the belief in the positive power of role modeling and in the conscious efforts of staff members to act as surrogate parents to young people who often have had limited experience with adults in any supportive, meaningful way.

T-CAP NORTH

PARENT ORGANIZATION

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.
Thomas L. Jeffers, President
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Harrisburg, PA 17102
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www.yapinc.org
Tjeffers@yapinc.org

OUTCOME DATA

Seventy-five percent of T-CAP North participants receive a "positive discharge," which allows them to move to less restrictive care, reside at home, or live independently.

OVERVIEW

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), is a private, nonprofit organization that provides alternatives to incarceration. Founded in 1975, YAP now operates 90 programs in 9 states. T-CAP began in 1992 works to connect families with community-based services and supports—public schools, alternative education programs, scouting and other activities, and employment opportunities—appropriate to their specific circumstances.

T-CAP North serves 40-50 young people between the ages of 10 and 17 for about 10 weeks each. Between 75 and 80 percent of those who come into the program are involved in gangs. About 5 percent are female and most are African-American and Hispanic. The program refuses admission to no one.

When a new family or participant enters T-CAP, a service plan is established and adopted by the family, the probation department, and T-CAP's director. The family is assigned a paid advocate from the community to coordinate the plan and establish connections between the family and community resources. Advocates are asked to have face-to-face contact with their families several times each week, including a weekly 1-hour session with just the parents or guardians. Advocates get to know families and young people well, and they help tailor individual support packages that might include parenting classes, counseling, job placement, or alternative schooling. In this context, life skills are taught to the child and to the family.

The program finds jobs for students who are 14 or older. Jobs must be of interest to participants, pay a minimum of $50 per week, and have the potential to teach skills. This is called "supported work," and it is seen as a critical diversion for students from gang activity. Wages are subsidized by YAP. Advocates also lead young people and their families in field trips, community service, and other enrichment activi-

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case example: **alternative to incarceration** system point–target population: adjudication of young offenders, aged 10–17 ■ contact: Belinda Hampton, Director ■ 2235 North Main Street ■ Fort Worth, TX 76106 ■ 817-625-4185, 817-625-4187 fax ■ Tcap44@yahoo.com

ties that increase participants' confidence and their awareness of social and cultural issues. Advocates are responsible for transporting families or young people to court, jobs, or school and for helping them fill out paperwork, for example, for school enrollment or employment. T-CAP advocates are allocated funds to ensure that families are fed, clothed, and sheltered.

EXEMPLARY PRACTICES

T-CAP North follows a "wraparound" model in which the comprehensive needs of a young person—family relationships, social development, financial, legal, educational, emotional, and vocational—are met by a paid advocate hired from the community. Advocates often are college students or recent graduates recruited to work 15–30 hours each week, acting as role models, mentors, and liaisons between the student and the family, school, court system, and employers. They provide families with the individual attention they need to promote close relationships and foster meaningful, lasting change.

Because of the stress inherent in the one-on-one approach, the director and other professional staff closely supervise and support advocates. T-CAP North's family-focused intervention eases the pressures and conflict families experience when young people become involved with the courts. T-CAP uses individual and group counseling, conflict resolution, and life skills training to help the family become an asset and a strong, supportive foundation rather than a deficit. In the process, young people and their families develop the skills they need to find creative solutions to their own problems.

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acknowledgments

Many people and organizations contributed significantly to the publication of this toolkit. In particular we thank the Annie E. Casey Foundation for its support, especially in the work of Julie Caple, Connie Dykstra, Talmira Hill, Lisa Kane, and Bart Lubow.

The following people provided much useful preliminary information for the toolkit: John Brooks, YMCA-USA; Ray Chase, American Correctional Association; David Coi, Coalition for Juvenile Justice; Mary Fairchild, National Council of State Legislators; David Gruber, Workforce Strategy Center; Carolyn Haynes, National Council on Crime and Delinquency; Sarah Ingersoll, National Campaign Against Youth Violence; Lisa Lybert, National Crime Prevention Council; Shawn Mooring, Public/Private Ventures; Ira Schwartz, Center for the Study of Youth Policy; Pat Torbett, National Center for Juvenile Justice; Linda Wilkerson, American Probation and Parole Association, Council of State Governments; Jesse Williams, City and County of San Francisco.

We are grateful to the representatives of each of the initiatives profiled in this toolkit for sharing their time and stories with us. And we thank the many young people who shared their insights and whose successes are testament to the worth of the programs and policies of the initiatives featured.

The draft review by the following panel resulted in substantive improvements to this report. We thank them for their participation. Beverly Bachmein, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; Mike Buzbee, Gulf Coast Trades Center; Carrey Cockerell, Tarrant County (Texas) Juvenile Services; John Dillow, Living Classrooms Foundation; Doug Dodge, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; Derrick Dolphin, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Job Corps; Barry Krisberg, National Center for Crime and Delinquency; David Lah, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration; Ned Loughran, Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators; Thomas MacLellan, National Governors' Association, Center for Best Practices; Ed Ridgway, National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership; Kristin Rantanen, PIC of Philadelphia; Juan Sanchez, Southwest Key Program.

A focus group of the following corrections administrators was convened in October 1999: Bill Bankhead, Joyce Burrell, Sherese Brewington-Carr, Gary Dalton, Rick Hill, Manfred Holland, Ralph Kelly, Al Lick, Jose Lozada, Mark Martin, Geno Natalucci-Persichetti, Mary Ann Saar, Gayle Turner, and Gina Wood.

Ned Loughran and the staff of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators surveyed council membership, hosted a members' focus group, and provided support and encouragement from the outset of this project.

Joshua Weber and Amanda Lauffer of the Youth Development and Research Fund contributed substantially to the Program Profiles. John Savage of the Justice Policy Institute contributed to the Overview. Ellen Wernick of EW Consulting edited early versions of the report.

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information, visit the Foundation's website, www.aecf.org.

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